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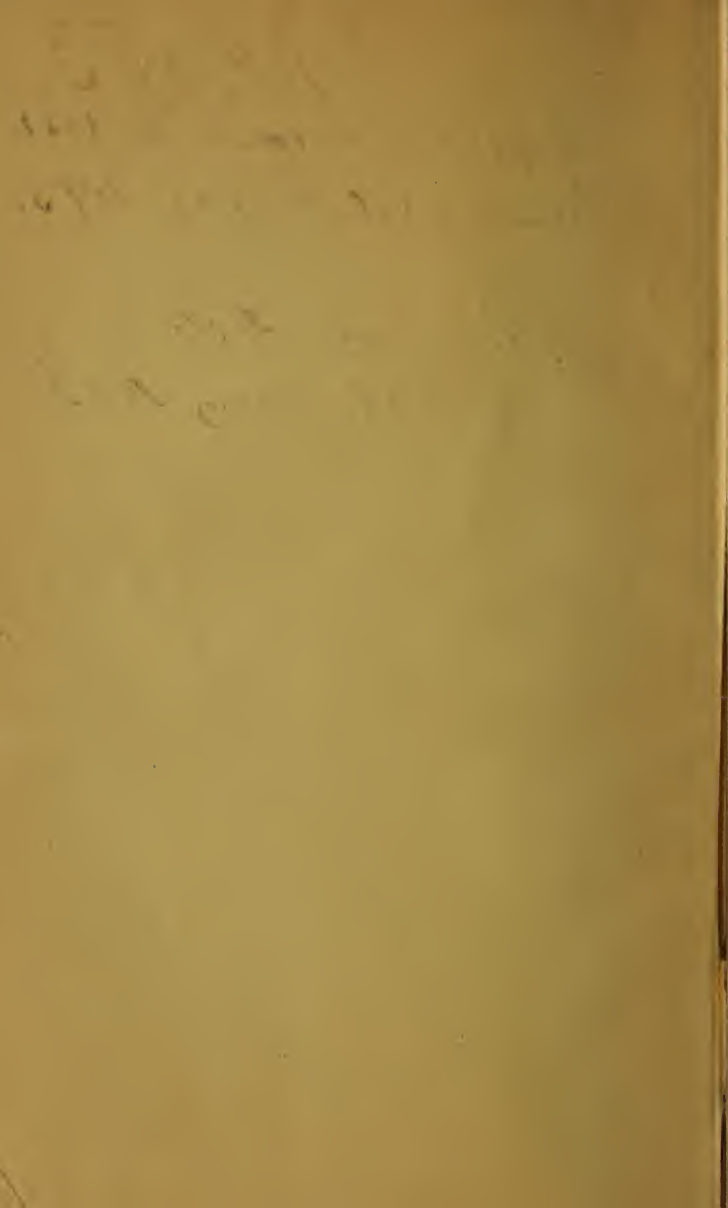
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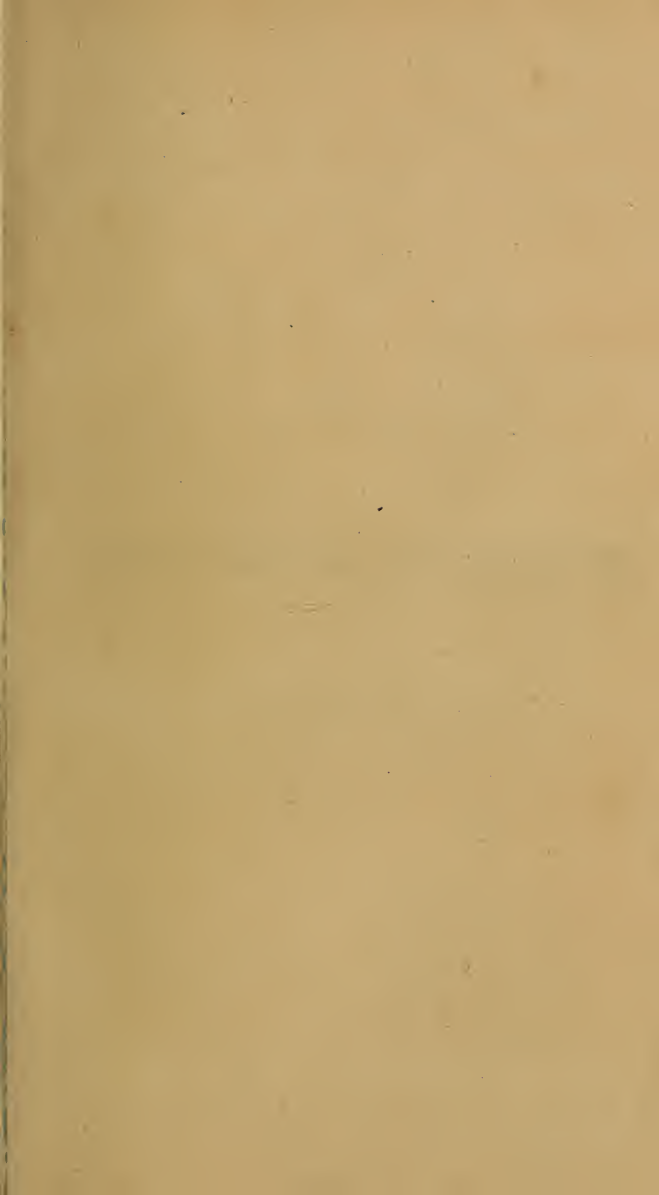
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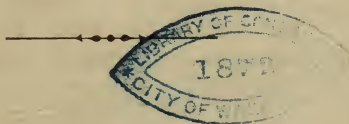
JOHN ROGERS, THE MARTYR.





FRONTISPIECE.

HISTORY
7
OF
JOHN ROGERS, THE MARTYR.



*Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and
approved by the Committee of Publication.*

Sara H. Browne.



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JOHN ROGERS, THE MARTYR.



WHAT child, who has ever seen or studied the old fashioned Primer, with its pictorial "Alphabet," its "Instructive Questions and Answers," its "Creed," its "Cradle Hymn," its Smithfield scene, with the memorable poem which accompanies it—what child, we ask, who has gazed with sympathetic sorrow on that group of little children clustering about their afflicted mother, as they stand by the blazing pile which consumes the body of their sole earthly protector, has not earnestly desired to know something more of the sad history than the one brief paragraph in the Primer contains? Ah, how many tears have been shed over that rude

engraving, with only that short sentence, and the martyr's "Advice" to throw light on the pitiful picture! And how many questions have been asked about "John Rogers," of those who knew nothing of him save what the Primer imparted in the days of their own childhood!

In the following pages we propose to offer a few brief incidents in the life and death of one whose name has been a household word for many generations past, and whose pictured circumstances of distress have moved the sensibilities of childhood throughout Christendom.

The story is written, children, for you: and it is to be hoped that the lessons of piety and Christian fortitude which it inculcates, will be for your "instruction in righteousness."

But in order that you should perfectly understand how Mr. Rogers came to be a martyr—that is, how he came to suffer death for a steady adherence to those views of religious truth which the Word of God

teaches, it will be necessary to go back a few years antecedent to this date to show the causes which operated to produce it—causes chiefly traceable to the bigotry, cruelty, and intolerance of the Romish church. And for this purpose we will introduce our narrative with the story of

THE CHILD-KING.

Henry the Eighth, of England, was one of the most selfish, profligate, and corrupt kings that ever sat on a throne. The blood of his unfortunate subjects was made to flow in rivers if necessary, to gratify his passion, policy or caprice; even those allied to him by the nearest and tenderest of human ties, had no immunity from conspiracy, false accusation, or violent death, if they chanced to stand in the way of his personal indulgence or political aggrandizement. Perverse and inflexible in his purposes, he chose to promote to places of rank and office, such men only as would yield

themselves tools to work his will, however unreasonable and malicious. For those who opposed the weight of intellect or influence against his gross vices, or his cruel rapacity, there was neither justice nor mercy.

Before these sad and bloody days, the church of Rome had held all nations in its grasp; at least it was thought to have a right, superior to that of kings and emperors, to dictate and to command. For many centuries this power had been growing more and more arbitrary, all over Europe, till few had dared even to question it. Such as had the courage to do so, were deemed too impious to live, and were dealt with accordingly. It was accounted heresy to doubt any thing, however absurd or wicked which the Pope and his Cardinals thought expedient for the poor ignorant people to believe; whether the Bible said so or not, it made no difference;—it was the business of the people to *believe* what their priests told them—and alas, they

had small means of examining for themselves, had they been allowed to do so, or possessed the requisite intelligence; for they had not the Bible as you have, children; it was a sealed book to all but the learned, being in a language which the common people could neither read nor understand: all they knew of it was by the interpretation of the priests, many of whom were so ignorant they could neither read or explain correctly the simplest of its precepts. But this was a state of things most favorable to perpetuate the power and authority of the Pope. The enlightened and intelligent, were regarded with suspicion, and not unfrequently branded as heretics if they ventured to dissent from the great Head and Body of this corrupt church, and the very lightest punishment the heretic might expect was excommunication, which in those days was a terrible thing—inasmuch as the subject of it was thereby cut off from all civil, ecclesiastical, or personal rights and privileges; his property confiscated, and

himself reduced to the utmost degree of want and misery ; while no one might aid, protect, or befriend him, on the penalty of a similar punishment. Torture, penance, or even death itself were oftentimes chosen by the unfortunate heretic, rather than excommunication.

But after many years this spiritual bondage became quite intolerable, and a few bold spirits had dared to dispute the progress of so abject a despotism. Martin Luther, and many other noble names, had arisen in Germany, and after a fierce conflict with the "Man of Sin," had succeeded in throwing off a yoke which they were no longer able to endure. From thence, the Reformation had spread among the European nations, and was now taking gigantic strides towards the attainment of that liberty of conscience which is perfectly consonant with the teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

King Henry the Eighth was for many years a staunch and unscrupulous papist.

Indeed, so long as nothing occurred to thwart his selfish plans, or oppose his iron will, the Pope might do what he pleased. His gross and sensual nature had little regard to the commands of Him who is "Head over all, God blessed forever;" for his self-styled vicegerent he was capable of only an *apparent* reverence; and therefore when some intervention of papal authority threatened to subvert certain darling schemes of his own, King Henry, brimming with anger, suddenly assumed an attitude of defiance, and declared his kingdom exempt from the dominion of the Roman Pontiff. He himself would thenceforth become head of both church and state to his people.

So bold and decisive a measure excited various emotions among all classes in England. Some disapproved, others extolled the course the king had taken; and among the latter were the poor trembling Protestants of his realm, who hoped to find a covert from the tempest of persecution under the wing of their own sovereign, as he now

no longer acknowledged allegiance to Rome, the parent of bigotry, crime, and cruelty, towards all abettors of the Reformation. But, alas, their expectations were doomed to bitter disappointment. Henry had only transferred to his own hand the persecuting policy; still the fires of martyrdom blazed over the devoted island, and added many a name of which the world was not worthy, to the saintly catalogue, who sealed the testimony of Jesus with their blood.

Multitudes left their native land to seek a temporary residence till the storm which beat upon their unhappy country should be allayed; and many already abroad, deferred their return for like reasons—they would not rashly or needlessly rush into danger or death; neither would they shrink from it should God in his providence plainly call them thus to witness for the truth.

Such was the state of affairs in England when Henry the Eighth was called to answer his last account, before the “King of kings and Lord of lords;” leaving his

crown and throne to his son, Edward the Sixth, who was only *nine years old*.

Think of it, little readers—a boy of nine years, a king! Perhaps some of you think you should like to be a king and wear a crown of gold and diamonds, and have plenty of money and jewels; live in a palace and be served by every one;—what a merry time you would expect—what continued enjoyment of power and pleasure! Let me beg of you not to harbor so mistaken an idea;—the king on his throne has no happiness like that of the lowly born subject; his heart aches with anxieties, cares, and apprehensions; his head throbs with pain under an oppressive sense of burdens and responsibilities; he has no quiet slumbers at night, like yours;—no joy and lightness of heart such as the poorest child may find in its innocent frolics! No, no! Kings are to be pitied far more than envied, and so are the children of kings who are brought up to so sad an inheritance as a crown! Doubtless every true friend

of little Edward the Sixth wept tears of sympathy when the diadem was placed upon his childish brow, knowing full well that in those dark and troubled times, it could do no less than pierce like a crown of thorns!

But this "Child-King" possessed some things which all children may laudably desire; nay, which they should pray for, and incessantly strive to obtain; he had a Christian spirit—a heart renewed by the Holy Ghost even in his childhood; he had such an earnest zeal for the spread of gospel truth in its purity, and simplicity, and for the overthrow of error, delusion and superstition in his own land, that he has been called the English Josiah; and indeed, he strongly resembled that young Jewish monarch, who set himself so resolutely to suppress the gross idolatry into which his people had fallen.

A perfect contrast to his father, was young Edward, in mind, in spirit, in civil policy—indeed in every thing: his rare

kingly virtues won him the admiration of men who had grown gray in the service of church and state—while his deep consistent personal piety was a rebuke oftentimes to those who were set apart as teachers of religion. He took the Bible for his counselor, and learned thence those lofty principles and precepts which are as well adapted to guide the monarch on his throne, as the beggar at his footstool; and so firm and fearless was his adherence thereto in the administration of his government, that it has been said with much justice, he would have become a martyr had he not been a king.

It is a piety so fervent, so decided, and so consistent, that we would beg the young to imitate in Edward the Sixth. Piety becomes a cottage just as well as a throne. It is a kingly quality in a servant as well as a prince; it ennobles, and beautifies every character, and confers a crown at last—a “crown of glory that fadeth not away!” Doubtless this blessed young king

now wears that crown: you and I may one day wear it if we will seek for it as he did; "Laying up treasure in heaven where the moth and the rust cannot corrupt, and where thieves never break through and steal."

The reign of the Child-King was destined to be a very short one. God called him to his own presence, and an inheritance among the sanctified, when he had worn an earthly diadem for six years and eight months; but in that brief period he had done what he could to eradicate Popery from his kingdom, and place Protestantism on a secure foundation; he had simplified the order of public worship, removed the tokens of the Romish superstition from the churches, recalled many of the pious and earnest Reformers whom the persecutions of Henry the Eighth had driven into exile; and had done his utmost to place the Word of God in the hands of the people. The Pope, you know, does not approve of this; its enlightening influence

is not favorable to a quiet endurance of the spiritual despotism which it has ever been the policy of the Roman Church to exercise over the great masses of common people. They must be kept in gross darkness, or they will discover the chains with which their souls are bound, and break them asunder. But Edward the Sixth was not afraid of the teachings of such a book; he knew it was a safe directory for the simple as well as the wise, the poor as well as the rich, the lowly as well as the lofty. But in those days the chief difficulty lay in devising a way by which they could have access to the sacred pages. It was impossible for the Bible to circulate as it does among us—can you think why, children?

In the first place it was comparatively a rare book;—and again, the people were ignorant from long neglect and oppression. It was very costly, too, and the poor could by no means afford to purchase copies;—and then the art of printing had but recently been discovered, and was yet in a

very imperfect state ; besides, people had just begun to think about having Bibles in the English language ; they had heretofore been in Latin, which only the priests and the great men were acquainted with ; so you can readily perceive there were many obstacles to be removed before the poor people could become familiar with the oracles of God. Just for a moment contrast their condition with yours, dear children. Every one of you may own an entire Bible for a very trifling sum ; every one of you have been taught to read it when so young you can hardly remember it ; and its meaning has been so often explained to you in the Sabbath school, that it has grown so familiar you scarcely heed what your teachers say, or even what your Bible says, more than just to learn the texts of which your lesson may consist. Ah, how much greater will be your accountability than that of the children of King Edward's time ! Much will be required where much is given, you must remember ; therefore improve to

the utmost the brilliant light of truth and wisdom which shines about your privileged pathway, all the distance from the cradle to the tomb.

But those who sincerely desire and resolve to benefit others, will not be disheartened by many difficulties; and King Edward and his ministers provided for the spiritual improvement of the people as well as the times would allow. A copy of the Bible in English, with some approved commentary annexed, was ordered to be stationed in some public place in every town, whither the people might resort to read for themselves, or bring some one to read for them when unable to do so! This was the very best expedient they could devise, and a sorry one enough we should regard it in these days; yet it was a considerable improvement on the former advantages of the English peasantry, and contributed greatly to their instruction and enlightenment. Just think! to have but one Bible in a whole town, and that one *chained* to

its place, so that no one should remove it! How we pity the poor men and women who must travel a long distance just to spell out a few lines of the precious message which God has sent to the nations, in his holy word. Let us appreciate the blessings of our own times, as we compare them with the past, and of our abundance, send forth to those who are groping in the yet grosser darkness of heathen idolatry. Oh, is not this a fitting time for carrying out our Lord's sublime injunction to send this glorious gospel to every creature; when it can be so easily and so cheaply multiplied by the mighty aids and agencies which we have lived to see in successful operation? If all children who have a Bible of their own, were just to ask and act upon the question, "Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do" in the matter? it would perhaps be accomplished before another generation should be gathered to their fathers.

Young Edward the Sixth labored dili-

gently and zealously, as we have said, for the suppression of Popery and the advancement of the Reformation in his kingdom; and he had a great band of devoted helpers in the good work; but still there were very many who opposed it secretly, if they dared not do it openly; and who only waited for a favorable time to avow hostility to the Protestant cause. But its popularity was now so strong, that they were obliged to pay a show of respect at least, and restrain the outflowings of an intolerant and persecuting spirit. A strong band of Reformers, we have said, gathered about their youthful sovereign, and statedly, and successfully proclaimed the truth as it is in Jesus. Among these hardy pioneers in a glorious warfare, was the subject of our little sketch—John Rogers.

But the appointed work of this excellent young king was drawing to a close. A lingering but hopeless malady had fastened itself upon him, and was slowly but surely sapping the foundations of his mortal exist-

ence. It was a gloomy prospect for Protestantism; it was the reviving hope of the Papal power; for a reason we will briefly explain.

Edward had two sisters, or rather half sisters, older than himself—Mary and Elizabeth. The eldest of these princesses, was the rightful successor to the crown, in case he should die without any children of his own; and here was the source of the bitterest trial reserved for his declining days; for he saw himself fading like a half-blown flower in life's spring morning, and he saw that in his early death an unutterable calamity would fall upon his poor Protestant subjects; — for the Lady Mary, the heiress apparent, was a bigoted Catholic, and would, he well knew, speedily revive those fires of persecution and martyrdom, which in his brief reign had been quenched. Edward knew, and his people knew, that the blood of the faithful must again flow like water in the desperate struggle which would certainly ensue for the ascendancy

of Popery; and in an agony of apprehension he sought, with the concurrence of the ministers of state, to devise some measure to avert a stroke so disastrous to the public welfare, so calamitous to the church of Christ, just recovering from the capricious tyranny of Henry. And so in the days of his languishing, he adopted the only expedient in his power; and transferred the succession from his sister Mary to his cousin, the Lady Jane Grey, an enlightened Protestant as well as a beautiful and exemplary young Christian, and one who would help onward the blessed Reformation.

This done, the young king rapidly declined. "About three hours before his death," writes one, "his eyes being closed, and supposing no one in hearing, he breathed this memorable prayer, so full of pious resignation, yet so conscious, like Paul, that to abide still in the flesh were seemingly more needful for his beloved people.

“ ‘ Lord God, deliver me out of this miserable and wretched life, and take me among thy chosen. Lord, I commit my spirit unto thee ; thou knowest how happy it were for me to be with thee ; yet for thine elect’s sake, send me again life and health that I may truly serve thee. O my Lord God, bless thy people and save thine inheritance ! O Lord God, save thy chosen people of England ! O Lord God, defend this realm from Popery, and maintain thy true religion, that I and my people may praise thy holy name for thy son Jesus Christ’s sake.’

“ His dying prayer was granted, and his realm fully delivered from Popery within a few years afterward, but not till God had branded it with a fiery memento of its shame, in yielding once more to the impious sway of its great enemy.”

The last words of Edward were, “ I am faint—Lord have mercy on me, and take my spirit !” and thus he fell asleep in the arms of that compassionate Saviour who

delights in the service of the young, in the sixteenth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign. We may be permitted to follow him in imagination to heaven, and hear him welcomed as a good and faithful servant into the joy of his Lord.

After the decease of Edward, the Lady Jane Grey was proclaimed queen, to the exclusion of the princesses Mary and Elizabeth. But many of the people were dissatisfied with this arrangement, and so they revoked the instrument which conferred the crown upon the Lady Jane, and under the most solemn promises and pledges that she would befriend and protect the Protestants, elevated Mary to the throne of her ancestors.

But children, it is one of the elementary maxims of the Romish Church, to "keep no faith with heretics;" and, as Protestants are those who deny the power and authority of the Pope, and are consequently heretics in their views, Queen Mary felt under no obligation to keep her promises of leni-

ence towards the advocates of the Reformation ; and, accordingly, she commenced one of the bitterest persecutions which the world in modern times, has known. There was no more safety for the zealous and earnest preachers of the Truth—the simple truth as it fell from a Saviour's lips, unattended with pompous rites, festivals, shows and formulas ; for in the days of the apostles, and, for many years afterwards, such things were unknown. There was no longer protection for the humble worshiper of God as a spirit, instead of saints and images, sacraments and relics. The prisons were crowded, and blood began to flow. The beautiful and innocent Lady Jane Grey was hurried to the scaffold, to atone for a reluctant consent to wear a crown but a single day. Truly it was but a crown of thorns, and soon exchanged for a crown of glory and rejoicing among the angels whose spotless purity her own resembled. She died with all the heroism of a martyr, although not such in the strict

sense of the term; but she possessed the martyr spirit, and would very likely have suffered at the stake, in defence of those principles of religious liberty and faith, which animated her youthful heart, while she yielded up her life upon a bloody scaffold, as the usurper of a throne and crown!

But the details of her interesting history do not properly belong to the range of this brief sketch; it is enough to remark, that with her barbarous execution began the sanguinary work of one whose name will go down to the remotest posterity, coupled with the most fearful of epithets, but yet most appropriately descriptive of the character and reign of Bloody Mary!

The efforts of young Edward the Sixth for the enlightenment of the public mind were instantly annulled. The teaching or preaching of Protestant clergymen was prohibited; while the Bibles—the great, chained, folio Bibles, were removed from their public stations, and forbidden to be read or

explained. All were commanded to return to the old Popish doctrines and worship, on pain of persecution and death. And, in order to secure the obedience of the common people, it was thought politic to make examples of some of their most able and gifted preachers. Those ministers, therefore, who had been popular and successful advocates of the Reformation, were accordingly first made to feel the weight of Mary's wrath, joined with that of the Roman pontiff, to whom she had surrendered her conscience as well as her kingdom. And this brings us to John Rogers, the first Christian martyr, under the reign of this bloody princess.

This eminent minister of Christ was, in his early youth, regarded as a lad of great promise, of unusual ability and scholarship. He received his education at the University of Cambridge, in England, and was designed for the church. After finishing his collegiate course, he was invited by a company of English merchants, at Antwerp, to be-

come their chaplain. He consented, and for some time discharged the duties of his office with a fidelity and fervor, which won him the respect of all who knew him. But the Reformation was rapidly progressing in the German provinces, and Mr. Rogers very soon became a thorough convert to Protestantism. Here, too, he became acquainted with several earnest and godly men, who were diligently engaged in translating the Bible into the English language, for the use of those who could never expect to acquire a knowledge of the Latin. To this enterprise Mr. Rogers gladly lent the aid of his superior learning, and rendered very important service to the translators, which greatly facilitated its publication.

In Germany, Mr. Rogers added surprisingly to his store of erudition, and before many years had become what was esteemed a very wise and learned man, as well as a man of most ardent and sincere piety. By and by, he was solicited to become the pastor of one of the Reformed churches, in

Saxony; a trust which he accepted, much to the edification of a kind and affectionate people, among whom he labored for many years. Here, too, he married a wife, and was bringing up a numerous family in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

But, after the death of Henry the Eighth, when the dear young Edward had set himself so vigorously to the work of purifying the land from idols and vain observances, Mr. Rogers began to reflect that his services as a religious teacher might, at this junction, be more needed in England than in Saxony, where the Reformation was already triumphant; and when he received an urgent request from his young sovereign, to return and labor at home, he found himself unable to resist the appeal, and repaired to London, where he was made prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, and afterwards a divinity lecturer. Here he remained during the brief duration of Edward's reign, discharging the duties of

his elevated post with ability and signal success.

But Mary had now ascended the throne, and was striving to trample down Protestantism, root and branch. Should he fly from a perilous position, and again take refuge among the quiet valleys of Saxony, where he could still preach the truth, with none to molest or disturb him? No. Should he submit to the requisitions of the "man of sin," and return again to the bosom of that corrupt and bloody church, which was gathering fresh vigor from the contemplation of the field already for a reeking harvest? No. No. He would stand bravely beside the band of fellow-workers, who were ready to go to prison and to death for the testimony of Jesus. And he did.

When it came his turn to preach in the Cathedral, instead of counseling his people to compromise their consciences by a pacification with Rome, he boldly exhorted them to remain in the true doctrine, which the

Scriptures inculcate—which the sainted Edward had stayed himself upon, in life and death, doubtless finding the end of his faith in the salvation of his soul. He warned them, plainly and solemnly, to beware of Popery as an evil and bitter thing, which God hateth; and counseled them to resist unto the end, the encroachments of this old leprosy of the Church, and cleave to the simple truth as Christ taught it.

For such plain dealing, he was immediately summoned before the Queen's Council, where he was able to defend himself with so much point and wisdom, that his accusers failed of their design, and he was for that time set at liberty.

Soon, however, the Queen issued a proclamation against the preaching or teaching of Protestantism, charging those who had hitherto done so, with sedition and heresy. Under the operation of this proclamation, Mr. Rogers was again called before the Council, to answer for his former discourses at St. Paul's, and other places,

where he had fearlessly preached the truth. He was assailed with a torrent of reproaches and revilings, which ended in a command to remain a prisoner in his own house.

And here we can perceive how strong were those principles of Christian integrity, which actuated him. He might easily have escaped from the power of his enemies by a secret flight. Perhaps they wished he would, or were, at least, willing he should make the attempt. Perhaps he was tempted to do so, by a contemplation of the sad condition into which his native land was again plunged, and the little probability of an immediate change for the better. His flock in Saxony would welcome him as their pastor again. There he might freely preach the truth as it is in Jesus; and there, too, his young family might find a safe and peaceful abode.

Such considerations as these would furnish powerful motives to a good man, especially a good father, to avert the dangers

which threatened himself and his household; for, Mr. Rogers could not but know his innocent wife and children would find no favor at the hands of his persecutors, because they belonged to a minister, and the Pope forbids ministers to marry, although the Bible does no such thing.

But, strong as the motives were to fly, there were stronger to remain and face the storm, which was beginning to burst over the devoted realm. He had been called to answer in Christ's cause; to that cause he was pledged; and he chose to honor it by life or death, whichever the Supreme Ruler of earthly potentates might see most for his own glory. He chose to "suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures" of peace and security for a season; and so he remained a voluntary prisoner, neither attempting to escape, or to shun the perils which surrounded him.

His persecutors themselves were struck with the consistency of this course; it argued a conscience void of offence, and

this was very likely to reprove those, who, in similar circumstances would "flee when no man pursueth." They could not enjoy the contrast with their own base eye-service, which his conduct afforded: and so, Bishop Bonner, one of the most cruel of all the tools of the bloody Queen Mary, commanded him to be removed from his own house to Newgate Prison, where the vilest of criminals were confined. Think what a trial to a grave and pious clergyman, to be thrown in among thieves, and blasphemers, and murderers, whose oaths and obscenity might shock the very spirits which dwell in outer darkness. But such was the portion of this good man, and, doubtless, in imitation of his Master, who freely went into the abodes of publicans and sinners, to reclaim and reform them, Mr. Rogers tried to set before them that gospel grace, which excludes not even the most abandoned from the kingdom of glory, if they will but repent, forsake their

sins, and exercise faith in the Saviour of sinners.

After a while, Mr. Rogers was again brought before the Queen's Council, to be examined concerning his guilt or innocence of the charge of heresy. But they had previously determined to proceed in such a manner as should leave him little chance to defend himself by reasons and arguments, which they could not answer, and which they did not care that the people should hear. So they asked him, at once, if he would renounce his faith, and return again to the Roman Church, and receive the Pope as its great head.

He replied, that he knew no other Head of the Church than Christ, the great "Shepherd and Bishop of our souls;" denying any other authority to the Pope than such as other Bishops possess.

This excited great tumult and severe reproaches, which Mr. Rogers endured with meekness, and yet with a firmness, which all the brutal taunts of his angry enemies

failed, in the smallest degree, to intimidate. He demanded the right to be heard, while he defended his opinions and his conduct, claiming the protection of the laws of the land, so long as he violated none of them. But in vain he appealed to law, or right, or justice; all these must bow down before the blind bigotry of fierce fanatics. They cut short his eloquent and urgent plea for liberty to set his position in its true light before the Council and the world, by abruptly offering him the Queen's mercy if he would recant and conform, bidding him avail himself of it speedily, for, neither Mary nor St. Paul were in favor of making long conference with heretics. Mr. Rogers denied that he was a heretic, and began to establish the point so clearly, that his adversaries, perceiving the advantage he was gaining, forthwith ordered him back to prison. In his cell, he wrote an account of this mock trial, which he concludes in these words:—

“The Lord Chancellor bade to prison

with me again. 'Away, away,' said he, 'we have others to examine;' if I would not be reformed, (so he termed it,) then away, away! At that moment I stood up, for I had kneeled all the while, and one who stood by, said to me, 'Thou wilt not burn with this courage when it cometh to that!' I answered, Sir, I cannot tell; but I trust in my Lord God, *yes!*—and I lifted mine eyes to Heaven!"

Ah, good John Rogers! He knew where to look for help and strength in this hour of extremity and peril. He well knew whence cometh the renewing of the Christian's spiritual might, to do—to bear—to venture—to overcome! And he was helped to "fight a good fight, to finish his course" and enter into rest.

Back he went to his loathsome prison, amidst scoffing and reviling, too opprobrious to record; lamenting not that he was reviled and evil-entreated; such had been the lot of his Divine Master when upon earth; and he well believed that the "dis-

ciple was not above his master nor the servant above his lord," that he might count on exemption from such trials—no—but that he was not suffered fairly to "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," and honestly to "give a reason of the hope that was within him," that all might see and understand wherefore he was called to suffer. He committed the history of his insults and injuries to paper, asking the prayers of all true Christians "That both he and all the brethren in the same case and distress, might despise all manner of threats and cruelty, and even the bitter, burning fire, and the dreadful dart of death, and stick like true soldiers to their dear and loving Captain; that they might persevere in the fight, if He would not otherwise choose to deliver them, till they were cruelly slain of His enemies. And if I die," he continues, addressing those of like precious faith, "I must heartily, and with weeping tears, pray you to be good to my poor and honest wife, being a stranger, and all my little

souls, hers and my children—whom with the whole faithful and true congregation of Christ, the Lord of life and death save, keep, and defend, in all the troubles and assaults of this vain world, and bring at the last to everlasting salvation; Amen—Amen ! ”

At his next examination the scene of levity and clamor, among the council and bystanders, baffles description; and the earnest voice of Mr. Rogers, as he strove to make his grave arguments heard above the laughter, jeers, and mockery of his judges was, as they intended, completely drowned in the disgraceful uproar; and again he writes in his cell an account of this “Second confession, that should have been made, if it might have been heard ! ”

At this odious manifestation of injustice, the people, who had assembled to witness the trial, expressed some sympathy with the man whom many had known and revered as a learned and faithful minister of Christ, but who was now subjected to such wrong

and outrage under the pretence of justice. This the Bishops could not tolerate, and thenceforth they took care to admit none to the examinations but those base enough to approve their offensive and abominable proceedings.

Next day a similar scene was enacted in the council chamber, whither the prisoner was again brought. The Lord Chancellor asked whether he would now accept the Queen's mercy, which before had been offered him; to which question Mr. Rogers firmly replied, that having ascertained what that mercy meant he utterly refused it; it was the mercy, he said, with which the fox or the wolf regard their prey; a mercy the ravenous beast can well afford to show the hapless creature so soon to glut his savage appetite; but he *would* accept *justice* at the hands of his sovereign, and of her ministers,—nay, with honest vehemence, he once more demanded the right to defend his opinions either verbally or in writing, and conjured the council by every motive

drawn from divine or human laws, to permit him to do so, under circumstances befitting the gravity and solemnity of the subject. But Bonner and Winchester were not to be foiled of their prey by any seeming regard to the rights of their helpless victim; they refused longer to listen to him; he had contemned the Queen's offer, and persisted in adhering to his heretical doctrines—and nothing now remained but to excommunicate and degrade him, and deliver him up to the secular power for the endurance of an ignominious death. To these childish and frivolous ceremonies Mr. Rogers submitted with a dignity which threw additional odium on the heartless levity of his persecutors. As he was about to be taken to prison again, he said he had one last and most reasonable request to prefer, which he trusted would not be denied.

“What is it?” asked the Chancellor.

“That my poor wife, being a stranger, may come and speak with me as long as I live;” replied Mr. Rogers, “for she hath

ten children," he continued, "that are hers and mine, and I would counsel her what were best to do when I am no longer here."

"She is not thy wife!" angrily retorted the Chancellor; "a priest cannot have a wife, thou well knowest, and it is not fit for thee to see this woman!"

"Indeed, my lord," urged the afflicted and insulted prisoner, "she hath been these eighteen years my lawful wedded wife, the virtuous mother of my little ones, and she much needeth my counsel."

But nothing could move the pity of Winchester and his fellows. The humble petition was rejected, and with scoffs and railing on the subject of marriage among priests, Mr. Rogers was once more remanded to prison to pray for the little helpless group he was about to leave like lambs in the midst of prowling wolves; but he confided them again and again, to the charge and keeping of that good Shepherd who not only careth for the sheep, but is likewise the door of the fold, and he knew they were safe: and

though he might never more on earth behold their loved and familiar countenances, he had a joyful and sustaining trust that the reunions of eternity would once more gather them into his paternal arms, to dwell in that "City which hath foundations whose Builder and Maker is God." And so he essayed to quiet the yearnings of natural affection and prepare himself for the altar of sacrifice.

He had now been in prison a year and a half, and between his condemnation and execution a few days only intervened; during which he wrote many valuable and instructive things, although he knew it would be the policy of his enemies to destroy whatever might tend to encourage or strengthen others to endure such a terrible "fight of affliction," looking for the same recompense of reward.

It was in the cell where he was confined that those memorable lines which have melted many a sensitive little heart, from generation to generation, as the Primer has

descended from father to child, were written; but whether by Mr. Rogers, or by a godly man who had been confined there before him, is doubtful. To be sure the metre and versification are not very polished, and sometimes the sense is obscure and involved; but when we remember they were written almost three hundred years ago, when our language was much more imperfect than at present, and under circumstances so unutterably trying, and in so near a prospect of one of the most dreadful deaths which human cruelty can possibly invent, we are ready to excuse its faults and regard its excellences with peculiar and reverential interest.

On the morning of Monday, the fourth of Feb., 1554, Mr. Rogers was awakened from a sound slumber, by the wife of his keeper, who came to say that the time had arrived, and to bid him make ready for the fire. He received the terrible announcement with perfect composure, and only remarked that he would need to spend little

time in dressing. He was once more taken to Bishop Bonner, by whom the foolish ceremony of degradation was performed, which consisted in attiring the subject in the robes of the Romish priesthood, made of coarse canvass, placing a mitre upon his head, and other tokens of ecclesiastical dignity, and then, in the presence of the people, stripping them off one by one, and delivering him to his executioners.

After this unmeaning mummary had been submitted to, Mr. Rogers, with the humblest, but most earnest importunity, once more begged permission to see and speak with his wife and children before his death. This request, to the everlasting disgrace of Bonner and his fellow-persecutors, was again inhumanly refused, and the martyr proceeded to Smithfield, where the last frightful scene of the tragedy was to take place.

On the way thither, however, Mr. Rogers enjoyed a very unexpected gratification. His poor wife, with ten children on foot

beside her, and a little new-born infant in her arms, had stationed themselves on the road which he was to pass, and there they had their last melting interview. It was indeed a spectacle to try a heart of stone. A great multitude of people who followed to witness the end, were deeply affected, and tears were shed, and lamentations and wailings were heard on every hand. But when they beheld the martyr with steadfast faith and courage commend them fervently to heaven, and one by one take his last earthly leave of the helpless young circle, with prayers and blessings, yet with no evidence of human weakness or repining, they were constrained openly to glorify God in his behalf, whose grace is sufficient for his people in the darkest extremity.

Arrived at the stake, he addressed the people briefly, exhorting them "to abide faithfully in the doctrine which he had declared to them; for the truth of which he was about to add his dying testimony. He was

content, he said, not only to suffer such bitterness and cruelty as had already been shown him, but also to give his flesh to the consuming fire for the witness of Jesus."

One of the sheriffs, named Woodroff, asked him whether he would not now recant and renounce his heretical opinions?

He meekly replied, "That which I have preached, will I seal with my blood!"

"Then thou shalt die an accursed heretic!" rejoined the sheriff.

"That shall be known," answered the martyr, "at the day of judgment."

"Well," persisted the unfeeling wretch, "I will never pray for thee!"

"But I will for thee," was the Christlike response.

His pardon was now brought and offered him, while chained to the stake, if he would even then consent to renounce Protestantism; but with holy scorn he utterly refused it, commending his cause into the hands of the Divine Advocate, and fearing rather to offend "Him who can destroy both soul and

body, than those who may kill the body, but after that have no more that they can do."

The pile was then lighted, and as the flames rose about him, he washed his hands in them, with a lofty disdain of mere physical suffering, compared with the glory which should so shortly follow. And thus, with wonderful patience and serenity, died John Rogers, the first martyr of the reign of Bloody Mary.

After the terrible scene was over, the desolate and distressed widow, with her eldest son, Daniel, repaired to the cell in which the now sainted husband and father had spent the weary days of imprisonment, in the hope of finding some token from his own hand of the manner in which those trying days had been borne. Very little expectation had they, however, for they knew his enemies would be vigilant to destroy whatsoever they could find, that none might be encouraged to do as he had

done, by being made acquainted with the strong consolations, which he had enjoyed. They searched, with many bitter tears, and were just about to leave the dreary spot, with disappointed hearts at the fruitlessness of their errand, when young Daniel chanced to cast his eyes beneath some neighboring stairs, where lay a black object, partially concealed by the darkness of the shadow. He took it up; it was the cover of an old book, but on being unfolded, was found to contain the precious records of his father's last thoughts, of his various examinations, and other papers of inestimable value to his loving friends, as well as to his fellow-sufferers for the truth, which had been written in the gloom of that miserable dungeon, and thus hidden from the scrutiny of his enemies.

From materials thus preserved, the pious martyrologist, Fox, has prepared his brief notice of Mr. Rogers. From this source, the Primer obtained its touching poem; in-

deed, nearly every thing now known of this good man, was derived from that concealed old book-cover and its contents, which Mrs. Rogers and Daniel bore away from Newgate Prison. And enough it contained, to show forth the excellency of that religion which enabled him to triumph over insult, affliction, persecution, pain, and death, in defence of the truth.

We hope this sketch will do more than merely gratify the curiosity of the young reader in relation to its subject. We wish it might impart additional glory, and beauty, and desirableness, to that blessed, Christian cause, which so many good men have been called to shed their blood in honoring and upbuilding, and furnish an additional incentive to childhood and youth to embrace it early; that it may be exemplified and adorned by a long, and consistent, and useful life.

The days of martyrdom are past; but there are still difficulties to be overcome,

and obstacles to be removed, and exertions to be made, and means to be provided, for the spread and triumph of the truth in all the earth. This must cost earnestness, zeal, self-denial, and the pouring of vast sums into the treasury of the Lord. This is the toil and sacrifice required in our favored times, dear children, and shall it be required of you in vain?

WILLIAM HUNTER,

THE BOY MARTYR.

PERHAPS it would be neither uninteresting nor irrelevant to append to the foregoing, a brief account of one, who, in his very youthful years, was called to wear the bright crown of martyrdom. It is delightful to contemplate the triumph of those high and glorious truths, which Jesus came to make known to our fallen and guilty world, in persons of mature and manly age; but when they shine forth in the young, with a brilliancy which lights up the gloom of the valley of death, till it even wears an alluring and inviting aspect, then, indeed, we behold them in a form which challenges our warmest and sincerest admiration, leading us to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

William Hunter, the subject of this sketch, was born at Brentwood, in England. His parents, though poor in this world's goods, were rich in that "faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," and they had been enabled to rear their children so successfully in that faith, that some of them at least, very early exhibited the most beautiful illustrations of the faithfulness of that promise, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This youth, with his brother Robert, were among those whose names, it might reasonably be believed, were early written among the sanctified.

William had been apprenticed to a silk-weaver, in London, and had always fulfilled his obligations to his master with great fidelity and conscientiousness, remembering that "one is our Master, even Christ," and that he requires, according to our various circumstances in life, custom to whom custom is due, service to whom ser-

vice, fear to whom fear, and honor to whom honor. How delightful it is to notice the operation of such principles, in the conduct of those in subordinate stations; how truly they indicate the right spirit, and how seldom, even in this world, they lose their reward!

This lad had doubtless been greatly profited by listening to the plain and spiritual preaching of the Protestant clergymen of the metropolis, during the reign of Edward the Sixth. Probably he had often attended public worship at St. Paul's Cathedral, where Mr. John Rogers, with other pious and learned ministers, preached the simple truth of the gospel to immense assemblies of earnest hearers. He had doubtless improved such opportunities as the times afforded, for acquainting himself with the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and, limited as they were, it is but justice to say, his familiarity with the Bible should put to shame many a Sabbath scholar, who has been the owner of a Bible

ever since he can remember, and yet knows very little of its sacred contents. William Hunter was obliged to go to some church or chapel, in company, perhaps, with a dozen more, who might be waiting for their turn to read a few verses in the great, public Bible chained to the desk. In these days, how many would not read it at all, under similar inconveniences. But William thought no sacrifice too severe, to lay up a store of its pearls of great price; and while the privilege lasted, he was one of its most eager and grateful participators.

But it was now about to be withdrawn. A time of darkness and trouble had come. Edward, the blessed young reformer was dead, and his bloody successor and sister had just ascended the throne, thence to send down her name to posterity as the embodiment of every thing harsh, cruel, capricious, and unfeeling. Liberty to worship God, in simplicity and sincerity, unencumbered by the formulas and pageantries of the Romish ritual, was now no more. Every one was

commanded to return to the old idolatries and image worship of popery, at the peril of liberty, and even life itself. Those who refused, could count on little short of death; for it was esteemed gross heresy, and for the heretic, Rome knows no mercy.

It was in the first year of Queen Mary's reign, that William Hunter, then an apprentice in London, as we have before mentioned, was met one day by the priest of the parish where his mother resided, and commanded to attend mass on the following Easter. Now the mass is one of the most idolatrous and absurd of all the observances of the Romish church; and William, holding it in abhorrence, in common with all Protestants, refused to attend. The priest was very angry, and after in vain attempting to enforce his command by exciting the boy's fears, threatened him with the vengeance of the Bishop. When his master heard of William's altercation with the priest, and how it had terminated, he began to think that if the threat was put in exe-

cution, he himself might be implicated in the affair, and thereby get into trouble. So he told William his apprehensions, and desired him to leave his employment, if he could not conform to the requisitions of the priest. This of course he could not do, and therefore he left his master, and returned to his father's house at Brentwood.

A few weeks afterwards, William went into the chapel, and opened the great Bible on the desk to read. The Bibles were not yet removed from the public places, although it was fast becoming a dangerous practice to read them, and one looked upon with extreme jealousy by the priests. As William Hunter read aloud, probably for the benefit of some present on a like errand, who could not so well make out the sense of the sacred oracles, a priest, named Attwell, stepped up and began to rebuke him sharply, for meddling with a book he could neither understand or expound; and added, that it was never a merry world since the Bible came abroad in English.

William ventured modestly to dissent from this opinion; he expressed his reverence for God's word, and his sense of the blessing conferred on the people by its circulation.

This the priest disputed with warmth, alleging the incapacity of the common mind to comprehend it; the priests and ecclesiastics alone should have to do with the Bible; they can impart to the people what is suited to their understanding and wants.

William could not assent to such views, and he still attempted to defend the ground he had taken, till priest Attwell, flying into a rage with the youth, reproached him as a heretic, promising in a rude way "that if he did not turn over a new leaf he would broil for it!"

"God give me grace," said the youth, "that I may believe his Word and confess his name, whatever come thereof."

"Confess his name!" cried Attwell,—

“you will confess it in perdition all of you Protestants, and you deserve no more !”

William meekly rejoined, “You say not well, Father Attwell,” ‘at which,’ remarks the martyrologist, ‘the priest ran out in a rage, and from an *ale-house* hard by, brought in another priest of some higher authority than himself, who immediately began to question young Hunter.’

“Sirrah,” said he, “who gave you leave to read and expound the Bible ?”

William replied that he did not pretend to expound it, but only read therein for his own comfort.

But that was far from satisfying the priests, who rebuked him for presuming even to do that, and proceeded to inquire how he regarded certain doctrines of the Popish creed, particularly that of Transubstantiation, on which they have always laid great stress. This doctrine, children, teaches that the bread and wine used in the sacrament is changed after its consecration, into the *real body and blood* of our Saviour,

instead of emblems of the same, as regarded by Protestants; an idea at once so monstrous and absurd that the common sense of a child would repel it. This was one of the doctrines, a denial of which, always proved dangerous, and very often fatal to the martyrs, as it was esteemed unequivocal evidence of the rankest heresy.

It was for the sake then of drawing this youth into a snare, that Father Attwell and the other priest, who was called a vicar, asked what he thought of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, so plainly proved, they said, in the sixth chapter of St. John's gospel.

William boldly declared he found no such doctrine there; whereupon they cried out upon him as a convicted heretic, and after further taunting and threatening him, they departed to execute their evil intentions.

The vicar went immediately to a justice named Brown, and related what had passed, with such exaggerations of the truth as he

pleased to make. Justice Brown immediately sent the constable for William's father, who had just heard from his son's lips what had occurred in the chapel, and had insisted that he should try to escape from the danger he had incurred by so candid a testimony for the truth. They questioned the old man about William, and inquired whither he had gone; but he could not tell. The justice at first threatened, and then flattered him with many fair promises that no harm should come to either of them, if he would discover his son's retreat, and bring him back. Money was also offered, which the poor old man indignantly refused. But to satisfy the justice, and prevent any bad consequences if possible, he rode about the country for several days, neither intending nor wishing to find William: but greatly to his distress and dismay, he unexpectedly met him on the road, and with many tears communicated the errand on which he was sent, proposing in the agony of his paternal heart, to go back

to Brentwood as if unsuccessful. To this, however, the upright nature of this excellent youth would not consent, and so he voluntarily returned with his father.

He was instantly seized by the constable and put in the stocks for the night. This species of confinement consists in securing the feet through apertures in strong pieces of timber, while the rest of the body is at liberty, but obliged to maintain a most uncomfortable and uneasy position. But to this the lad was perfectly willing to submit: indeed, he well understood, that this was one of the very lightest inflictions he was likely to endure if he witnessed a good confession for his Divine Master; as by his assisting grace he was firmly resolved to do.

The next morning he was taken before Justice Brown: who, after a very coarse and angry greeting designed to intimidate his youthful prisoner, called for a Bible and opened it, saying, "I hear say you are a Scripture man—you can reason and ex-

pound as much as pleaseth you!" He then alluded to what he had said to the vicar in the chapel.

"When we consider," says William's biographer, "the very limited education enjoyed by persons of his rank in life, it becomes doubly interesting to trace the enlightening effect produced on their mental no less than their spiritual understanding by the study of God's word, which is able to make the most ignorant, wise unto salvation. The justice no doubt, thought he might easily silence a poor apprentice boy, by his united learning and authority." Mark how entirely he failed. Turning from the sixth of John to the twenty second of Luke, he said, "Look here; Christ saith, that the *bread* is *his body*!"

William reflected a moment, and then replied, "The text saith how Christ took *bread*, but not that he changed it into another substance," (as the word 'Transubstantiation' signifies) "but gave that which he took, and brake that which he gave,

which was nothing but *bread* as is evident from the text."

At this, Mr. Brown in great anger, took the Bible, turned over the leaves, and flung it down again violently, exclaiming, "Thou naughty boy! Thou wilt not take things as they are, but expound them to thy mind. Doth not Christ call the bread his body plainly? And thou wilt not believe that the bread is his body even after consecration. Thou goest about to make Christ a liar!"

"I mean not so, sir," answered William; "but rather, more earnestly to search what the mind of Christ is in that holy institution wherein he commandeth us to remember his suffering, death, and resurrection, saying, 'This do in remembrance of me.' And also, though Christ call the bread his body, as he doth also say that he is a vine, a door, and yet is not his body turned into bread any more than he is turned into a door or a vine. He here useth figures of speech."

The justice grew at every word more enraged; he was unable to carry on the argument, perceiving that William had the advantage, and therefore could only utter scoffs and taunts and reviling in reply to him, till weary of his brutality and the confusion of the same, he requested of the justice "that he would either suffer him to answer for himself, and hear him quietly, or else send him away."

"Indeed, I will send thee away tomorrow to my lord of London, and he shall examine thee to thy content," answered the magistrate; and he was as good as his word; for he immediately wrote a letter to Bonner, the cruel Bishop of London, and the next day dispatched it and young William together by the constable.

In his first interview with Bishop Bonner, that crafty persecutor began with great mildness to talk with him, promising that if he would at once turn to the Roman Catholic faith, all that had passed should be overlooked. The youth answered,

“that he had never fallen from the Catholic church of *Christ*, but believed and confessed it with all his heart.”

The Bishop than inquired concerning his belief in the doctrine of Transubstantiation, to which he replied,

“I understood justice Brown to have certified your lordship of my opinions in that matter; which, by God’s help I will never recant!”

The artful Bishop then suggested that he might be ashamed to recant openly; but if he would there, between themselves alone, acknowledge his error and conform, he promised it should go no farther and he might return home in peace.

The youth replied that he would gladly return to live with his father, or his master, if he might be allowed liberty of conscience; if no one would disquiet his conscience he would intrude his opinions upon none.

The Bishop readily agreed to this, *provided he would go to the church, and*

outwardly observe all their ceremonies and superstitions!

This, our heroic young confessor honestly declared he would not do for the worth of the world!

Bonner now, as might have been expected, flew into a passion, and changed his policy and his tone towards William Hunter. His mild expostulations and promises had been lost upon a youth whom he was quite sure of winning over to popery by a few smooth and flattering words, but whom he found quite as obstinate and self-willed as any of the doctors of divinity!

"You will not recant!" exclaimed the Bishop; "I will make you do so in good earnest, I warrant you!"

"You can do no more than God will permit you," replied William, humbly.

"Wilt thou not indeed recant?" shouted Bonner.

"No, never, while I live, God willing," he answered firmly.

Upon this, a command was given to place him once more in the stocks, where he sat for two days and nights, with only a crust of brown bread and a cup of water provided for his refreshment. The Bishop paid him a visit at the end of this time, expecting to find his courage very essentially daunted. Seeing the bread and water untouched beside him, he ordered his servants to liberate him and give him a substantial meal. Afterwards the Bishop sent for him, and again tried to persuade him to renounce his heretical opinions, as he chose to regard them; but with no better success than before. Bonner then reproached him for denying the faith in which he was baptized.

“I was baptized in the faith of the Holy Trinity,” answered the resolute boy; “the which I will never go from, God assisting me by his grace.”

Bonner now lost all patience; he delivered him to the keeper of the felon's prison, and commanded that he should be

loaded with irons, as many as he could bear; telling William, after he had inquired his age, that he would be burned before he was a year older, if he did not yield.

William simply replied, "God strengthen me in his truth!" and so went meekly to prison.

Here he remained for nine months, quietly enduring the miseries allotted him, and even rejoicing that he, a mere boy, was accounted worthy of so distinguished an honor in the church, as to suffer for his dear Saviour's sake.

But the designing Bishop Bonner seemed bent on his apostasy; fearing, doubtless, the effect of such heroic faith in one so young, upon the common people, particularly those of his age and station, who in every community are very numerous, and therefore powerful. He had sent for him no less than five times since his imprisonment, to make at each interview some fresh assault upon his courage and constancy.

But all was in vain; the Lord was pleased so to sustain his youthful servant in the midst of his severe trials and temptations, that he was able to trample under foot the manifold devices by which the Adversary sought to draw away his soul from its steadfastness.

At last he was condemned to be taken back to Brentwood, his native town, and there burnt to ashes! Others were condemned at the same time; and after receiving his sentence he was set aside to speak with Bonner when the rest should be dismissed to their prisons.

“Once more I give thee choice between life and death,” said the Bishop; “thy sentence can yet be revoked;—and if thou wilt even now recant, thou shalt be no loser thereby in point of worldly thrift; for I will make thee a freeman in the city, and give thee forty pound in good money to set up thy occupation withal; or, I will make thee steward of my house, and set thee in office. I like thee well, for thou hast wit

enough, and will surely prefer thee if thou recant!"

Ah, how sore a temptation—how wily a stratagem to entrap a young and unwary soul! To be rewarded, enriched, patronized, and even raised to some lucrative office by so great a man as the Bishop of London! He, a poor apprentice boy! But mark how that blessed promise to the faithful was fulfilled, "My grace is sufficient for thee!"

"I thank you for your generous offers," replied the steadfast youth; "notwithstanding, my lord, I cannot find in my heart to turn from God for the love of the world; for I count all things but loss in comparison with the love of Christ!" Noble, apostolic confession!

"Well," retorted the disappointed Bishop, "I have now done with thee; but let me tell thee, if thou diest in this mind, thou art condemned forever."

"God judgeth righteously," William an-

swered, "and justifieth them whom man condemneth unjustly!"

William Hunter remained a month longer in prison and was then conducted to Brentwood, his home, there to glorify God by offering up his life on the altar of his faith.

The day designated for his execution proved a popish holiday, and therefore it was deferred till the morrow; thus affording an opportunity they would not otherwise have enjoyed, for his afflicted friends to visit him. But precious as such a son must have been, his pious parents instead of lamenting over his fate, gave thanks to God for his steadfastness in confessing the truth, and prayed with moving importunity that he might thus endure unto the end.

His beloved mother, although her heart was bursting with the natural tenderness and sympathy of maternal love, and fully aware that her son's eternal gain would be her irreparable earthly loss, could yet rejoice that she was so happy as to possess a child who

could find in his heart to lose his life for the testimony of Jesus. Again and again she expressed these thoughts to William, whom they greatly animated and consoled.

“Ah, yes, mother!” he answered, “for the little pain that I may suffer, Christ hath promised me a crown of endless joy,—may you not be glad of that mother?”

With that his mother kneeled down saying, “I pray God strengthen thee to the end, my son, that this crown and this precious inheritance may certainly be thine.”

At these words, a pious gentleman of the neighborhood, a Mr. Higbed, who was himself ordained to serve his Lord and Master by the sacrifice of his life on the altar of martyrdom, came in and heartily rejoiced with the parents of the devoted youth that they were so honored as to call him their son; and like Abraham of old offer him an acceptable and a willing sacrifice to heaven. Other friends said the same, and many importunate petitions went up to the throne of grace that the young confessor

might patiently and gloriously attain the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul; comforted by his Father's rod and staff while he walked through fiery billows to the haven of eternal rest.

It was in an inn at Brentwood that this interview took place; for William was not allowed to tarry till the fatal hour under his father's roof, but kept under guard of sheriffs and constables at the public house. A great many of his young friends and acquaintances called to have a last sight of their old playmate under circumstances so terribly trying; some began to reason with him, and try to persuade him to save his life by recanting; while he in return, earnestly admonished them to turn from the idolatries and superstitions of the church of Rome, and serve God with that simplicity and spirituality which his word enjoins.

At length the appointed morning dawned, and William was roused from a disturbed sleep, which indicated by an unusual noise

and agitation, that some conflict was going on in imagination. His friend, Mr. Higbed, asked him what he had been dreaming. It was a dream, shortly after verified ; that of vehemently rejecting a pardon offered him at the stake !

The son of the sheriff who had been William's friend and playfellow from infancy, came in soon after, deeply affected by the grim preparations going on for the burning. He wept convulsively, and throwing his arms around the young martyr's neck, and with childlike pity, and simplicity, said to him, " Willy, do not be afraid of these men who are coming with scowling faces and heavy weapons to carry you to the place where you are to be burned up ! Oh, William ! Oh, William ! How can you ? How dare you ? "

" I thank God, I am not afraid," replied the lad, returning his friend's embrace ; " I have cast my counts already what it will cost me, as well as what it will gain me ;—an incorruptible inheritance, an unfading

crown, riches without wings, and the peace of God which passeth understanding !”

The sheriff's son could reply only by his fast flowing tears, and thus they parted.

With a cheerful countenance, and a light step, this heroic young soldier of Christ then gathered up his robe, and proceeded to the place of execution, led on one side by the sheriff, and on the other by his affectionate and faithful brother Robert, who had been untiring in his efforts to comfort and sustain him in the near prospect of an agonizing death. There is a natural dread of physical suffering which even exalted faith is not always entirely able to subdue ; and William doubtless derived both strength and courage from his pious brother's constant and cheering suggestions. At any rate it furnished a beautiful example of fraternal tenderness, to accompany him to the very scene, and through the very endurance of his last dreadful suffering, braving every hazard to which such disinterested affection exposed him.


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On the road they met their old gray-headed father, weeping at the heart-rending spectacle. "God be with thee, my son, William," sobbed the afflicted parent.

"And God be with you, good father," replied he; "be of good comfort, for I am sure we shall meet again, where we shall all be merry!"

The poor father answered, "I hope so, William!" and took his final leave of his beloved boy.

"Were not the parents of this blessed youth," writes one, "partakers in a special degree, of the faith of Abraham? Was it not a holy and acceptable sacrifice which they so meekly, and so unrepiningly, yea, so thankfully offered upon the altar of their steadfast faith? Oh, that the tale may sink deep into the heart of every parent who hears it. The day may yet come that shall test them and their children even with fire!"

When William Hunter arrived at the spot where the execution was to take place,

every thing was in so unprepared a state, that much delay was likely to be occasioned ; and therefore in the most profitable manner to occupy the brief remainder of life, he took a bundle of sticks prepared for his burning, and kneeling down upon it, commenced reading the fifty-first Psalm ;— a portion of Scripture especially precious to the sufferers for Jesus' sake. But the cruel fanaticism of some Romanist bystanders, interrupted even his last humble devotions. A letter from the queen was brought, offering him pardon if he would recant ; if not, he was to be burned immediately.

“No, no !” he exclaimed, with fervent emphasis, “I will never recant, God willing !” And rising from his knees he went up to the stake, and placed himself upright against it, where he was immediately chained by his old and bitter enemy, Justice Brown.

This hard-hearted and bigoted magistrate, bustled about with great apparent

complacency in the scene, in which he was a prominent actor, as he had been a procurer in an important sense ; and he seemed to regard the meek young lamb he had led to the slaughter, with the same savage delight with which the hungry tiger eyes a victim already in his merciless clutches.

“ More faggots,—more faggots ! ” roared the justice, “ there is not wood enough to burn a leg of him ! ”

“ Good people,” exclaimed William, “ pray for me ; and make speed to despatch me quickly !—Oh, pray, pray for me while ye see I live, and I will pray for you likewise ! ”

“ Pray for thee ! ” exclaimed the inhuman justice ; “ I will no more pray for thee than I would pray for a dog ! ”

William calmly replied, “ Mr. Brown, you now have my life,—that which you sought for ; I pray God it be not laid to your charge in the last day ; for I most heartily forgive you ! ”

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“ I ask no forgiveness of thee,” retorted the hardened persecutor.

“ I forgive thee, notwithstanding,” rejoined William, “ and if God forgive you, I will not require my blood at your hands ! ”

Then looking upward, he ejaculated, “ Son of God, shine upon me ! ” and at the same moment, from the sky, which had been darkly overspread with clouds, there shot forth so dazzling a ray of sunshine, full in the young martyr’s upturned face, that he was compelled through the sudden and excessive splendor to look another way. This incident was much remarked by the people who stood round him.

At this moment a Romish priest approached Robert Hunter, desiring him to carry a book he held in his hand to his brother, in order that he might be induced by its contents to recant. But Robert refused to touch it, and so the priest himself drew near to the stake where William stood chained, and holding the book open before

him, requested him to read therein. He recoiled from both book and priest, bidding him away with his false doctrines, and once more exhorting the people to come out from the abominations of Popery.

The priest indignantly remarked to him, "Look, how thou burnest here—so shalt thou burn in the deepest hell!" The true spirit of Romanism toward those who "obey not her decrees," in all ages.

Fire was now applied to the pile, while some pious voice cried out, "God have mercy on his soul," and all the people vehemently responded, "Amen, Amen!"

As the flame arose William cast his Psalter right into his brother's hand. "William, dear William!" said the agonized Robert, "Think on the sufferings of our blessed Lord, and be not afraid of death!"

"I am not afraid," gasped the poor young sufferer, "Lord, Lord, Lord, receive my spirit!"

'Then he bowed his head over the volumes of suffocating smoke which arose from the

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wet wood, and very soon was beyond the reach of all human torture ; having entered, as a good and faithful servant, into the joy of his Lord.



## THE "WORLD" BOUGHT FOR NINE SHILLINGS.

Rev. Dr. Vaughan, an eminent Congregational Minister, and President of the Lancashire Independent College, in a lecture on Persia, related the following anecdote :

He said that he well remembered when very young, possessing, for the first time, a guinea. He remembered too, that this circumstance cost him no little perplexity and anxiety. As he passed along the streets, the fear of losing his guinea induced him frequently to take it out of his pocket to look at it. First he put it into one pocket, and then he took it out and put it into another : after a while he took it out of the second pocket and placed it in another, really perplexed what to do with it. At length his attention was arrested by a book auction. He stepped in and looked about him. First

one lot was put up, and then another, and sold to the highest bidder. At last he ventured to the table just as the auctioneer was putting up the "History of the World," in two large folio volumes. He instantly thrust his hand into his pocket, and began turning over his guinea, considering all the while whether he had money to buy this lot. The bidding proceeded; at last he ventured to bid too. "Hallo, my little man," said the auctioneer, "what, not content with less than the whole world?" This remark greatly confused him, and drew the attention of the whole company towards him, who, seeing him anxious to possess the books, refrained from bidding against him, and so the "World" was knocked down to him at a very moderate price. How to get these books home was the next consideration. The auctioneer offered to send them, but he not knowing what sort of creatures auctioneers were, determined to take them himself. So, after the assistant had tied them up, he marched out of the

room with these huge books on his shoulders, like Sampson with the gates of Gaza, amidst the smiles of all present. When he reached his home, after the servant had opened the door, the first person he met was his mother. "My dear boy," said she, "what have you got there? I thought you would not keep your guinea long." "Do not be angry, mother," said he, throwing them down upon the table, "I have bought the 'World' for nine shillings." This was on Saturday, and he well remembered sitting up till it was well nigh midnight, turning over this "History of the World." These books became his delight, and were carefully read through and through. As he grew older he at length became a Christian, and his love of books naturally led him to desire to become a Christian minister. To the possession of these books he attributed, in a great measure, any honors in connection with literature that had been added to his name. He did not mention the circumstance to gratify any foolish feeling, but to

encourage, in young persons, that love of literature which had afforded him such unspeakable pleasure—pleasure which he would not have been without for all the riches of the Indies.

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### THY MOTHER.

“Cling to thy mother—for she was the first  
 To know thy being, and to feel thy life;  
 The hope of thee through many a pang she nursed,  
 And when 'midst anguish like thy parting strife,  
 Her babe was in her arms, the agony  
 Was all forgot, for bliss of loving thee.

Uphold thy mother—close to her warm heart  
 She carried, fed thee, lulled thee to thy rest;  
 Then taught thy tottering limbs thy untried art,  
 Exulting in the fledgling from her nest;  
 And now her steps are feeble—be her stay,  
 Whose strength was thine, in thy most feeble day.

Cherish thy mother—brief perchance the time  
 May be, that she may claim the care she gave;  
 Passed are her hopes of youth, her harvest prime  
 Of joy on earth; her friends are in the grave;

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But for her children, she could lay her head  
Gladly to rest among her precious dead.

Be tender with thy mother—words unkind,  
Or light neglect from thee will give a pang  
To that fond bosom, where thou art enshrined  
In love unutterable, more than fang  
Of venom'd serpent ;—wound not her strong trust,  
As thou would'st hope for peace when she is in the  
dust.

Mother beloved ! oh, may I ne'er forget,  
Whatever be my grief, or what my joy,  
The unmeasured, the unextinguishable debt  
I owe thy love ; but find my sweet employ,  
Ever, through thy remaining days, to be  
To thee as faithful as thou art to me."

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THE END.
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